



New State Law Tackles Confusing Property Deed Sales Mailings

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MADISON – Wisconsin residents should keep an eye out for official-looking mailings that offer to sell a copy of their property deed for \$89. What those mailers don't tell you is that homeowners can purchase a copy of their deed from a county register of deeds for a couple of dollars.

"Consumers have been concerned and confused about these mailings for years," said Sandy Chalmers of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). "Because the mailers look like they may be from the government, people often send money without first checking out the facts."

A new state law makes it easier for Wisconsin consumers to identify these mailings as sales solicitations, not official documents. Mailers offering to sell copies of government documents must now contain the following disclosures:

- The mailer must state in 24-point type that it is not from a government office and that no action is required.
- The mailer must provide contact information for the official government source where the record can be obtained and the actual cost of obtaining the record from that source.

"If you receive a property deed mailer that is missing these new disclosures, file a complaint with Consumer Protection," said Chalmers. "Don't pay an unnecessary and outrageous fee for something you can get from your local Register of Deeds for a few dollars."

For additional information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at datcp.wisconsin.gov, call the Consumer Information Hotline at 800-422-7128 or send an e-mail to datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov.

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